



A TEN MINUTE EVENING RITUAL

The Family Stress *Reset* Routine

Evenings are often the hardest part of the day. Five short steps, done in the same order, bring order, connection, and cooperation back to your home.

5 steps

About 10 minutes

Works with young kids and teens

INSIDE THIS ROUTINE

Why evenings unravel

The five steps, with timings

The words to use at each step

A seven day tracker for the fridge

What to do when it goes sideways

Plus a closing note from our team

Why evenings unravel

If your household falls apart between dinner and bedtime, nothing has gone wrong with your family. That window asks a lot of everyone in it.

1

Everyone arrives home empty

Children spend the day holding themselves together for school. Adults do the same for work. What is left over comes home, which is why small things land hard by six o'clock.

2

The transitions are the hard part

Most children are not resisting bedtime itself. They are resisting the switch from one activity to another. A sequence they can predict removes the nightly negotiation.

3

Predictability does the parenting

When everyone knows what comes next, there are fewer decisions to argue about. The routine carries the authority, so no adult has to be the enforcer every night.

HOW TO START

- Pick a consistent time. Right after dinner or right before bath tends to work.
- Keep the same order every night. The order is what makes it a routine.
- The adults go first at every step. Children copy what they see modelled.
- Try it for a week before deciding whether it works.

The five steps

Same order, every night. Ten minutes from start to finish.

1 The two minute declutter

2 min

Set a timer. Everyone picks up five items and puts them where they belong. When the timer goes, you are finished, even if the room is not perfect.

WHY IT HELPS

A visible reset lowers everyone's baseline. The timer makes it feel finite instead of endless.

2 The feelings check

3 min

Each person takes a turn. No fixing, no advice, no follow-up questions from anyone else.

"Today I feel _____ because _____."

WHY IT HELPS

Being heard without being managed is what keeps children talking to you. Adults too.

3 Tomorrow prep

2 min

Everyone answers both questions out loud, including the adults.

"What is one thing I need tomorrow?"

"What is one thing I am a little worried about?"

WHY IT HELPS

Most morning chaos is unfinished business from the night before.

4 The team moment

1 min

Say it together. Younger children can add a huddle or a handshake.

"We're a team. We help each other."

WHY IT HELPS

One shared line moves a set of tired individuals back into a single unit.

5 One minute of gratitude

1 min

Each person names one thing they appreciated today, however small. A snack counts. A hug counts. Nobody has to be profound.

WHY IT HELPS

How the evening ends is what your family will remember about the day.

THE TEN MINUTE MAP

Declutter

2 min

Feelings check

3 min

Tomorrow prep

2 min

Team

1 min

Thanks

1 min

When it goes sideways

Someone refuses to join. Let them stay and listen. Participation usually follows once it stops being a demand.

A step turns into an argument. Name it, park the topic until tomorrow, and move to the next step anyway.

You miss several nights. Start again with no commentary about the gap. Consistency matters more than streaks.

Seven nights, one page

Print this page and put it on the fridge. Let the children do the checking off. Missing a night is information, not failure.

STEP	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1 Declutter							
2 Feelings check							
3 Tomorrow prep							
4 Team moment							
5 Gratitude							
Evening felt calmer							

WHAT WE NOTICED THIS WEEK

ONE THING WE WANT TO KEEP DOING

This routine changes the tone of a home

Ten minutes a night will not fix everything, and it is not meant to. What it does is give your family a reliable moment of being on the same side. Over a few weeks, that moment tends to spill outward into the rest of the evening.

When family therapy tends to help

- ✓ Conflict at home has become the normal weather
- ✓ The adults disagree about how to handle things
- ✓ A child has withdrawn, or their behaviour has shifted sharply
- ✓ Your family is moving through separation, loss, or a big change

If a child is in immediate danger or talking about harming themselves, call 911, or 988 for the Suicide Crisis Helpline. Kids Help Phone is available at 1.800.668.6868.

READY FOR THE NEXT STEP?

Family therapy can deepen what you have started

Talk with one of our Registered Psychotherapists at no cost and no obligation. You are welcome to come as a whole family, as parents, or on your own.

Book your free 20-minute consultation

or call 905.553.9507

Takes 2 minutes. No credit card. No referral needed. Evenings and weekends available.

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